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# Raven, King Salmon and the Birds

A Play Based on Raven Stories by Katherine Mills and George Davis

*By Nora Marks Dauenhauer*



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Robin burned her belly trying to get at the fire.



Blue Jay still has the comb Raven made for him and is still angry he didn't get any salmon.

What happened to Raven? After he smooth-talked the Alaska Native Birds, he realized he had been so busy for so long he'd worked up an appetite. You could hear his stomach growling.

**Chorus:** *Growwwllllllll!*

He quickly grabbed the King Salmon tail, and said, "I think I'll go see my brother-in-law, the Brown Bear. And he flew away.

**Chorus :** *[Sings Raven song, "Du yaa kanagoodi"]*

She rubbed in the soot she had all over her from the ashes she was sitting in. "I'm tired and hungry," she said.

Blue Jay was so angry he went on, "Yakidi, yakidi, yakidi, yakidi, yak! You should have cooked the salmon more carefully! You should not have built the fire there near the stump!"

Raven pulled Blue Jay's feathers around his head into a **topknot** or a bow. Raven: "You shouldn't be squawking! Look at what a nice-looking guy you are! You look funny angry!"

Magpie was trying to fly off, but Raven pulled him back and tried to calm him down by running claws down his tail. That's why Magpie has that long tail.



This is where Chickadee got her black top and black rings around the eyes.

## Raven, King Salmon and the Birds

A play by Nora Marks Dauenhauer



## Vocabulary

- greenstone
- shortsighted exploit
- acronym
- PCBs
- heart's content
- content
- salvage
- wailing
- in a fix
- topknot

When the birds came back Raven was sitting by the uprooted tree stump looking sad, and saying, "We're so unlucky, you guys! This tree stump rolled over on the salmon on the fire and we can't even **salvage** any of it! We've lost all of it! It's all gone! All the skunk cabbage were brought for nothing."

Only the tail was sticking out from under the stump. The birds were sad. They cried. The birds were **wailing**.

All the birds were crying "Waaaaaaa!" Some were angry.

Raven was **in a fix**. He thought, "What am I going to do?" An idea! Raven: "Hey! You guys! Why are you crying? Come here!"

Robin came over. Robin was cold and got too close to the fire. When her belly caught fire she didn't even feel it until it was red. Robin: "Ouch! I'm burning!"

Chickadee was crying. She rubbed her eyes. She was so upset while she cried she rubbed her eyes and the top of her head.

In the meantime Raven put the layers of skunk cabbage and the salmon over them on the bottom of the pit the birds had dug for him. He covered it and built a fire over it.



When it was done Raven ate to his **heart's content**. Once in a while he would burp a long one. You see, it's okay to burp at a Tlingit dinner.

So he ate and ate and burped and burped until he ate up the whole salmon ("Oops! I ate it all!") before the birds could have any.

He was **content**. All that was left was the tail. He put his craft to work. He tried to roll a stump over the fire. He couldn't. So he finally just stuck the tail under it. He said, "There!"

# White Raven and Water

A play by Nora Marks Dauenhauer

## *Characters*

- **Storyteller** (the only speaking role except for "chorus" phrase spoken by entire cast)
- **Actors/dancers** wearing mask and wing costumes:
- **Raven**
- **Robin**
- **Chickadee**
- **Blue Jay**
- **Magpie**

## *Props*

- Plastic club or long balloon
- Stump
- Greenstone
- Skunk cabbage leaves
- Salmon (may be either a prop or a dancer)

## *Music*

- Raven Song, "Du Yaa Kanagoodi"

## SCENE 1

### A BEACH IN SOUTHEAST ALASKA

#### Storyteller:

Raven: walking along a beach. He sees a King Salmon jumping out of the water.

#### Chorus [as Salmon jumps]:

*Ei haaw! Ei haaw! Ei haaw! Ei haaw!*

He stared and stared, hungrily. Raven hadn't eaten for days. He could hear his stomach growling. [Raven makes sound of stomach rumble]

He could almost taste the salmon. He thought, "How could I get the salmon to come in?"

Then he found a **Greenstone**. He brushed it off and turned it this way and that way. An idea! "I'll put this up on a stump!"



Raven exploded, "Yuck! Yuck! Yuck! Yuck! It's contaminated there! It's as bad as **PCBs**. When my wife was alive she used to go over there! Throw them away! Throw them away! Look at the brown spots on them!"

He was pointing to imaginary spots on them. The little birds were sad, but they still wanted to help Raven.

Birds: "We'll get better ones, and clean ones too."

Raven told them, "Go over two mountains. Get the skunk cabbage only from there."

Birds: "How could we know his wife used to go there? We should have asked." They left.

Birds: "Let's hurry. Salmon is fresh for only a while." They hiked.

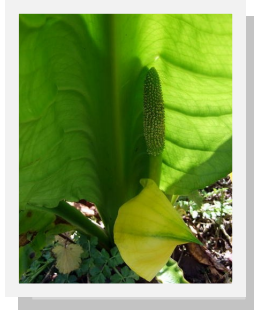
Then Raven said, “Gee! Now we gotta get some skunk cabbage to wrap our salmon with, and so we can put some skunk cabbage on the bottom of the fire pit. Why don't you go and get some?”

Birds: “Let’s pick only the nice ones. That is a nice guy.”

They went and picked nice huge ones, nice clean ones, and hurried back with them.

Then Raven asked them, “Let me see.” They piled them up in front of him. Then he looked them over.

While he looked them over he asked, “Where did you pick them?” They all pointed to the same place behind the village.



Then Raven said, “Hey, you! You dirty guy! Listen to what this Greenstone is saying about you. Hey, you! Listen to what he’s saying!”

**Chorus:**

*Ei haaw! Ei haaw! Ei haaw! Ei haaw!*

King Salmon jumped out there. Raven yelled at the Salmon, “Hey, you! Listen to what this little Greenstone is saying about you. Listen!”

King Salmon jumped out there, out from the beach Raven was on.

**Chorus:**

*Ei haaw! Ei haaw! Ei haaw! Ei haaw!*

Raven starts yelling insults. “Hey, you! Listen to what Greenstone said. Come on ashore! Come, jump on the beach!”

**Chorus:**

*Ei haaw! Ei haaw! Ei haaw! Ei haaw!*

And King Salmon jumped up on the beach. Raven, in his foolishness and **shortsighted exploit**, forgot he should have had a club to hit the nose of the King Salmon.

So he told the King Salmon, “Oh, my! Pardner, let me go in the woods first. I can hardly stand it!”

So he ran up in the woods to get a club. When he came back down, he had his club. But the King Salmon was out in the bay again, jumping around.

**Chorus:**

*Ei haaw! Ei haaw! Ei haaw! Ei haaw!*

He jumped out there. Raven: “Hey! Listen to what the Greenstone is saying to you! You dirty mouth! You dirty-gilled person, you! Hey! Do you hear this?”

Salmon jumped out there not bothered.

**Chorus:** *Ei haaw! Ei haaw! Ei haaw! Ei haaw!*

Raven: “Here’s what he just said. You dirty spine salmon.” At this the salmon jumped on the beach by Raven.

As it jumped on the beach Raven attacked it with a club. He slammed the club on its nose again and again and again and again until it was gone.

**SCENE 2  
FARTHER UP THE BEACH, ABOVE THE  
TIDELINE**

**Storyteller:**

The salmon was too heavy for him, so Raven organized a group of birds called Alaska Native Birds. Their **acronym** is ANB.

Raven said to them, “Hey, Grandchildren. Help me pull this salmon up, and we’ll bake it.”

When they pulled it up, Raven said, “We have to dig a pit for the salmon.” They dug a huge pit.